

VZCZCXRO9053
RR RUEHAG RUEHROV
DE RUEHHE #1209 3411312
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 071312Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2802
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 0103
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0086
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0633

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 001209

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2016
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AF, KPAL, FI
SUBJECT: GAERC - FINNISH RESPONSE

REF: STATE 195044

Classified By: POLCHIEF GREGORY THOME FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (U) PolChief delivered December GAERC demarche to Finnish EU Correspondent Jarno Syrjala November 5 and followed up further by phone November 7. Syrjala highlighted the following points:

¶2. (C) TURKEY/ENLARGEMENT: The Finnish Presidency is greatly encouraged by Turkey's announcement that it intends to open one airport and one port to Cypriot traffic. Syrjala confirmed that Turkey has informed the Presidency of this decision, adding that it can only have a "positive impact" on a GAERC ministerial that will focus heavily on enlargement questions in general and Turkey in particular. Many EU member states (MS) had indicated to the GOF that they did not want discussion of Turkey to "hijack" the meetings. In fact, Syrjala acknowledged, many MS have been speaking more openly in favor of freezing or even suspending new Acquis chapters for Turkey, and that their positions appear to be hardening. However, in light of new developments the Finnish Presidency will seek to allow "as much time as necessary" for discussion of Turkey's progress. Syrjala noted that the Finnish Presidency agrees with most US views on Turkey and re-emphasized the efforts Finland continues to make to keep Turkey's accession process on track.

¶3. (C) MEPP/LEBANON: Syrjala said that these discussions will take up the bulk of the "external relations" discussions at the GAERC. The EU shares the US concerns about Lebanon and about Hezbollah's disruptive behavior, and agrees that bolstering the Siniora Government is crucial. Regarding the MEPP, Syrjala reiterated that for the most part the "Spanish-French" proposal offers little new and will not significantly affect the EU's overall policies.

¶4. (C) KOSOVO/WESTERN BALKANS: On Kosovo, Syrjala re-emphasized that the GOF's national priority as well as that of the Finnish Presidency remain to keep the EU united behind UN Special Rep Martti Ahtisaari's efforts to implement a final status decision shortly after Serbia's January 21 elections. On Serbia, Syrjala said the EU Presidency appreciated our demarche point indicating that Belgrade needs to do more on ICTY cooperation. The Finnish national position has been one of the toughest in the EU on this point, he added; however, NATO's decision to offer PfP to Serbia will make it harder to ensure a strongly unified EU position.

¶5. (C) IRAN: Syrjala said that there would be a very short update from the EU Security Council members on the

status of sanctions negotiations at the UN. Most MS believe that a broader discussion of Iran is needed, he added, but because of time constraints that discussion will likely be put off until the first GAERC of the German Presidency.

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